CHAPTER 4

RESIDENTIAL BUNGALOWS: ARCHITECTURE AS A RESOURCE OF POWER

The architects of imperial Delhi collectively contributed to the unusually varied architecture of the residences. Edwin Lutyens built the houses for senior officials in the neighbourhood directly west of Viceroy's House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan), Herbert Baker designed a series of bungalows on King George's Avenue i.e. south of the secretariats and the Central Public Works Department (C.P.W.D.) under William Henry Nicholls and Robert Tor Russell built more than 500 bungalows for member of the government and senior officials in New Delhi.¹

Thus, European architects who were attracted to work in this new emerging imperial city designed the most of these buildings. They were clearly influenced by the style that Lutyens conceived of for the buildings of New Delhi. Some private residential buildings were also built.

British had planned the residential area in New Delhi clearly on the basis of racial, social and political consideration. These factors find its expression in the residential bungalows in Delhi. Thin white, thin black and rich white are some of the funny concepts which adds glory to the

¹ Andreas Volwahsen, *Imperial Delhi*, Germany, 2002, p. 239.
imperial British rulers of India in a racially discriminating residential plan for Lutyens Delhi.

The most numerous and unique type of dwellings for the Europeans in India, were however, the house type known as “Bungalow,” the origin of the word is difficult to trace. It is believed to have been derived from the Hindi word ‘Bangla’ meaning from Bengal. This has led to the attempt to trace the antecedents of the bungalow to the typical hut forms of the Bengal village. The bungalow as a building style for the British in India dated back to the 18th century. Derived from the thatched roof Bengali hut (hence the name) but constructed of masonry and elaborated to include a high ceiling, several rooms and a verandah etc. the bungalow spread rapidly throughout the interior of British India. Typically, the bungalow was square or rectangular and raised on a high plinth, like the indigenous village hut. The high plinth also corresponded to contemporary colonial ideas of safety and health.

The British adopted the Bungalow form, in contrast to say, the courtyard form not just for reasons of climate, but because the bungalow ideally combined with climate adaptation on a political purpose: that of social distancing. Its thick walls and high ceilings, while providing ample

ventilation, sheltered its English inhabitants from the hostile world outside and the encircling verandah at once shaded the main structure and provided the arena for a carefully regulated intercourse with that world. The sense of social distance and of superiority was reinforced by the placement of the bungalow in a large compound with an impressive entry drive and with access regulated by walls, gates and watchman. In the city, where space was at a premium, and especially in settlement colonies where the elite was less wealthy and a social distancing less urgent, the bungalows might be reduced in size and set on smaller plots.4

Thus the Bungalow was built for the protection from the hot climate, for the enclosed inner rooms and high ceiling kept the outside of glaze and heat at bay while allowing hot air to rise well above the heads of the occupants. The roofed verandah some times surrounding the whole building provided protection for the interior, while affording a pleasant site for relaxation or worth during the cool of the morning and evening.

Its sitting in a spacious compound away from the reflected heat of other buildings, further enhanced the comfort of the structure. The bungalow however, with its compound, also secured the important objective of keeping its English inhabitants at a safe distance from the

surrounding noise, dust and disease of India. Indeed the size of the compound, together, with its walls, gate, guard, and long entry drive, served to impress Indians with the power and authority of the British.\footnote{5}

The bungalow housing design had a number of specific elements, such as the verandah, the \textit{chajja}, compound and one storey house, all of which evolve in Bengal climate. The bungalow design became a model for British colonial housing not only in India but other British colonial countries as well. Such architectural design columned verandahs, flat-balustraded roofs, and large gardens with takes indicated native elements.\footnote{6}

Many Indian Princes have built palaces in New Delhi and the native architecture of these graceful residences blends effectively with modified classicism, influenced by native forms, of the government building.\footnote{7}

These bungalows varied in the details of plan, ornament, size and height in different areas where they were located, but basic principles are the same. In these houses kitchens, stores, offices and servants quarters etc. are founded. Most of the needs of the residents were met within the enclosed area.

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{5}{Thomas R. Metcalf, \textit{Ideologies of the Raj}, New Delhi, 1995, p. 77.}
  \item \footnote{6}{Iizuka Kiyo, 'Town Planning in Modern India', \textit{rep. EACS}, vol. xxix, No. 1-4, March 1990, p. 22.}
  \item \footnote{7}{William T. Couch (ed.), \textit{Coolier's Encyclopaedia}, Vol. 14, New York, 1956, p. 522.}
\end{itemize}}
As regards the ground plan of the bungalow, this also showed great variety within its general characteristics. Plans were mostly symmetrical. In most of the bungalows, the front of the house had a covered porch, for the convenience of residents and visitors from the gate of the compound the drive curved towards the house, situated generally in the centre and some times there were two gates, and a semi-circular drive connecting them. The compound varied in size and according to the status of the resident. For senior officials of the colonial government or army, the area of these bungalows went up to 15 acres.  

The colonial bungalow became a type of universal accommodation for the colonial community all over India and infact, colonial residences in Africa and the far east were called by the same name.  

Even the rajas for example, emphatically preferred making lump sum payments for land and utilities in Delhi rather than accepting annual leases or levies that might imply the inferior relationship of a tenant to a zamindar or landlord. Britain could scarcely risk offense to such useful allies. By 1916 a layout of prime sites for the chiefs centrally located, was complete. Eventually the Government of India located three dozen plots on perpetual lease, seven for senior rulers around at the east end of Kings

9. Ibid. p. 123.
way (Rajpath). The plan of each site and design of its buildings required approval by the Government of India.  

Not surprisingly the Raja’s houses resembled the viceroy’s house in their hybrid union of classical orders with indigenous motifs in everything from loggias to jalis. Two palaces (and drawings for three others) were by Lutyens, while the rest were by architects who admired him and had observed his work close at hand. Moreover, Lutyens and Baker enjoyed supervisory or censorial powers over new construction as “architectural advisors” to the capital, much as the viceroy himself exercised paternal and paramount authority over the native states. As pioneer art historian Earnest Havell, repeatedly emphasized the example set by the Imperial Government in Public edifices necessarily had “a potent influence” not only with Indian Craftsman but also with Indian Patrons – Princes and aristocrats – who looked to official architecture “for correct models of taste and fashion”.  

Thus, the bungalow, a very elaborate brick and mortar adoption of the mud huts of Bengal. Complete with its English tile lawn and enclosing hedge, was the basic residential unit for the colonial elite. The main house was a single storeyed structure partially or totally surrounded by

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11. Ibid. pp. 265-266.
verandahs. The rooms as in homes in the west were functionally distinct and furnished accordingly. The drawing and dining rooms were usually interconnected since these were public reception areas. The bedrooms, with attached dressing and bathrooms, flanked the reception rooms and had access to the verandah. There was sometimes a hallway that connected the entrance of the house to the back door, in which case the rooms would be arranged on either side with doors leading in to it. The kitchen was in variably a separate structure in the rear of the compound and close to the servants quarters since it was the domain of the servants, the noise and adores of the kitchen were excluded from the main bungalow. Both rooms too had an outside door so that the sweeper had access to them without entering the main living space. The interiors of the rooms were decorated in the style, which was fashionable in colonial pattern at the time.

Thus, the residential bungalows architecture is pure expression of power. Every single building and vista reflected the hierarchy of the society, which built it. At New Delhi the social structure of the British Empire was ossified for future generations to see. Land plots were allocated according to race, occupational rank and social status in the residential bungalows. A clear pattern of social segregation was established.
The pattern of seniority housing evolved by Lutyens clearly reinforced racial discrimination. To emphasize the superiority of the race of the rulers over the native, bungalows of junior European officials were placed on rising ground above junior Indians. Native clerks were placed in one part of the city while Indians chiefs and white people were placed in other parts. As a result of these policies even today we find palatial bungalows in New Delhi.

The passionate pursuit of system and symmetry in the new city represented a final attempt by the British to impress order on the chaos of Indian society. The city, which arose under the transcendent influence of Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker, represents the culmination of over two hundred years of persistent endeavour to achieve a true architectural synthesis of eastern and western architectural styles. To Sir Herbert Baker, the new city was the spirit of British sovereignty imprisoned in its stone and bronze. In Lutyens magisterial Viceroy's House the architectural experiments that began to create a distinct Anglo-Indian architecture in its own right in the late 18th century reached their culmination. Like all great works of architecture it has total unity and integrity and does not rely on a single façade for architectural effect. It dominates the entire city and is itself dominated by a monumental dome,
which came to be regarded as an architectural metaphor for the British Empire, as imperial in spirits as the solar *tepee*, which it resembles.

The task of maintaining cohesion in British India presented the Raj with several seemingly impossible problems. On the one hand there had to show of unity and closeness between the crown and the local *maharajas*, on the other hand, the Viceroy did not want to see the *maharaja* in their own places around the Viceroys House in imperial Delhi because they were indispensable to him for maintaining order in their native states.\(^{12}\)

The political calculation of the division of worldly power and economic advantages between the British crown and local kingdoms enjoyed success for several decades. This climate of prosperity and privilege gave added impetus to the construction of the town and the architecture in New Delhi. The gearing of all decisions to the standards of the British Empire, however, obscured the view of urgently needed social and economic reform.\(^{13}\)

Lutyens took care not to build palaces for the *maharajas*, which could compete with Viceroy's House. He deliberately aimed at forms and symbols, which were not used in Viceroy's House. And even if his patrons understandably enough did not really know what to do with obelisks, urns

\(^{12}\) Ibid. p. 250.
\(^{13}\) Ibid. pp. 250-51.
and palladian gates, he nevertheless succeeded time and again in harmonizing his own preferences with the expectations of his patrons. He allowed himself to borrow just one form, namely a comparatively small dome in the centre of Palace, as the symbol of princely powers.\footnote{Ibid. p. 251.}

Thus, in colonial India under the British rule racial and socio-economic segregation determined the character of residential areas and housing design. Various residential bungalows in New Delhi were designed in which most eminent bungalows which are as follows:


As pioneer art historian Ernest Havell respectively emphasized, the example set by the Imperial Government in Public edifices necessarily had “a potent influence” not only with Indian craftsmen but also with Indian patrons, princes and aristocrats who looked to official architecture “for correct models of taste and fashion.”\footnote{R.G. Irving, *op.cit.*, p. 266.}
The plan was a butterfly shape with a central domed entrance hall from which symmetrical wings radiated 55°.

For the architecture of Hyderabad House, the Nizam obviously did not suggest any formal models to his architect. Only a dome above the circular salon appears as a reflection of the Durbar Hall in Viceroy’s House and was indispensable as a symbol of domination visible from afar.

Thus, Hyderabad House is an impressive example of British eclecticism at the turn of the century. Out of the construction set of ancient Rome and its contemporary neo-classical variations, Edwin Lutyens put together an impressive building having no direct model. At first glance, this building seems familiar. Its elements, the round arches with inset pillars, the obelisks, the flower containers of the flat roofs, and the shapes of the windows are familiar to us.¹⁸ The interior has been renovated recently. Hyderabad House now used for official building. Walls are made of brick masonry, floors are stone, doomed are vaulted and roofs are concrete. It is an elegant and impressive range in cream stucco with stone dressing, accentuated by a shallow dome over the concave corner entrance bay. There are some effects on the façade because the verandahs and balconies have all been enclosed, drastically altering the original architectural concept.

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• **Baroda House:** Sir Edwin Lutyens designed the residence for the Baroda Maharaja in 1921. Formerly it was the palace (Residential Bungalow) at present it is Northern Railways’ office. Baroda House is situated directly next to Hyderabad House. It is located near India Gate Circle, to the north of the India Gate Canopy.

The building set on a butterfly plan, had wings set at an angle of fifty-seven degrees, a concave central porch, and a circular salon, in the building plan ensured that most rooms had several windows but at an extravagant cost in walling and roofing. There are magnificent staircases, leading to arcaded verandahs, loggias and courtyards, its share of deep-set *jalis* and ornamental parapet urns and prominent domes. A shady verandah of similar shape led to a curved terrace where *jalis* pierced a parapet to afford the benefits of both privacy and cool evening bridges.

For the façade of the Baroda House, Lutyens chose just one motif that he sat on the ground floor to a larger scale than in the lower upper floor, this is a round arch flanked by two rectangular wall openings. Interest at a Baroda House, however a centred not so much on rather repetitions facades but on the difficult triangular spaces inevitably generated by a butterfly plan, which Lutyens resolved in a graceful succession of circular and long round-ended vestibules and cunningly

19. Ibid. p. 259.
contrived lavatories around the lofty salon.\(^\text{20}\) In this building Doric columns and mouldings are also used for the decorative feature. Baroda House was built with a concave porte-cochere crowned by a shallow dome and delicate carved stone panels of pierced \textit{jali} work. In this building the parapet is adorned with urns. Walls are made of stone masonry over brick masonry. Floors are also made of stone, roof are of concrete.

- **Patiala House:** It is located Northwest of the India Gate Circle. This palatial residence was designed for the Maharaja of Patiala in 1938.\(^\text{21}\) Presently Patiala House is a part of the law courts.

  Architectural features of the Patiala House are a double-storeyed building the central portion is emphasized with a domed pavilion on the terrace and a projecting porch. Over the upper-storey there is a projecting \textit{chajja} running the entire length of the building. Decorative features of the Patiala House are mouldings, columns and \textit{chattris} etc.

  The walls are of brick masonry work, floors are made of terrazzo and roofs are made of concrete.

- **Travancore House:** This was originally the Delhi residence of the Maharaja of Travancore. It was built in 1929-30.\(^\text{22}\) State Bank of Mysore now occupies it.

Architectural feature of this building has double-height columns. In the front side four columns are made. It is a well-finished building set in a garden, like all other princely palaces. It is also based on butterfly design. A two-storey colonnade at the front of both wings has, on either side, rounded featuring the State Emblems and Prancing Elephants.

Decorative feature of this building are – niches, mouldings, jalis, and mediations. Walls are made of brick masonry, floors and made of stone and vaulted roof is of reinforced concrete cement.

- **Kerala House:** The building was originally the palace of the Maharaja of Cochin. It was built in 1927.23

Architectural feature are the large building is set in a landscaped garden and is entered from a central porch. Over the central porch on the upper floor are four Corinthian columns. The building has very high ceiling levels and there are minor side entries into the building. Round arches are used in the gate and on the window.

Decorative features of this building are Pendentives, Corinthian Columns and mouldings.

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• **Lala Diwan Chand Trust House:** It is situated near Mandir Road near Connaught Place. It was formerly a residential bungalow. At present it is under the supervision of the trust. It was built in 1926.\(^24\)

Architectural feature of this building are – the double storeyed building has an arcaded verandah running all around it. It can be entered from a central porch and the central portion has a high tower over it. Typical colonial mouldings, semi-circular arches pendentives, balusters, are commonly noticed. Jalis are also used in lower storey.

The decorative features of this construction are central tower and moulding.

• **Jaipur House:** It is situated near India Gate Circle. Jaipur House designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens as a Delhi residence for the Maharaja of Jaipur. It was built in 1936.\(^25\) Formerly it was the Palace, at present National Gallery of Modern Art. An extension to the building is done by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (H.R.D.).

Architectural features of this building are – the butterfly shaped plan, despite the numerous restrictions on the layout and façade controls, exhibits a distinctive Indian character. At the center of the house is a large circular room roofed by a prominent dome. The building itself is seated on

\(^{24}\) Ibid. p. 160; Lucy Peck, *op.cit.*, p. 272.

a plinth with bands of red sandstone. The red sandstone *chajja*, is also very prominent. Animal motifs, plasters are the decorative features of the Jaipur House. Walls are made of brick masonry.

- **Bikaner House:** Bikaner House is situated near India Gate, to the southwest of India Gate. It was constructed in 1938-39.\(^{26}\) Formerly it was the palace. At present Bikaner House is the Rajasthan tourism office. Walls are made of brick masonry; floors are made of stone and roof concrete.

  The area around the India Gate Circle was allotted to different princes and the buildings built were stringently controlled. The building is located at a very prominent location.

  Architectural significance of the above said building are – It follows the geometry of the plot, the building typical of the New Delhi style, is simple yet striking. The half-butterfly plan, semi-circular arches, mouldings and canopies were all of colonial characteristics.

- **Jaisalmer House:** This was originally the Delhi residence of the Maharaja of Jaisalmer – built in 1939.\(^{27}\) This two-storeyed building is not very colonial in appearance, and is built more in the then international

\(^{26}\) Ibid. p. 205.
\(^{27}\) Ibid. p. 222; Lucy Peck, *op.cit.*, p. 267.
style. There are circular projections at either end, with a projecting entry porch in the center.

The walls are made of brick masonry, floors are of stone and roof is made of concrete.

- **Darbhanga House:** This was the residence of the Maharaja of Darbhanga built in 1930s.\(^{28}\) This two-storeyed building is set in a landscaped garden with an entry porch in the centre of the façade, over which there is a colonnaded verandah. In this building a very different spatial heights designed to aid cross ventilation, thus, this building has many colonial elements.

Decorative features of this building is saucer shaped sculpture at each end on the parapet, mouldings, ornamentation in plaster, walls are made by brick masonry.

- **Kotah House:** This was also originally the palace of the Maharaja of Kotah and is popularly known as Kotah House. It was built in 1938.\(^{29}\) Later it is converted into Naval Officers Mess. Architectural features of this building are – the two storeyed building is slightly concave, with projections at either end. Tower, with a circular projecting entry porch, emphasizes the central entrance. This is a modernist style building but in

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the more decorated Art-Decoration inspired style seen at Farid Kot House also.

Walls are made of brick masonry, floors are of stone and roofs are of concrete.

**Kapurthala House:** This was originally the Delhi residence for the Maharaja of Kapurthala. It was built in 1940s.\textsuperscript{30} Formerly it was the palatial house at present it is a Government Guest House.

Physical description of this building is – the single-floor building has an arcaded verandah, which serves as the entrance. The semi circular arches are supported on circular columns. There are circular projections on the sides. In this building, mouldings are also used for the decorative. The walls are made of brick masonry. Floors are marble and roofs are made of concrete.

- **Birla House:** Birla House, the colonial period building is a significant landmark of Delhi. It occupies a significant site in New Delhi’s residential bungalow zone. It was built in 1930s.\textsuperscript{31} At present it is an Army Office.

\textsuperscript{30} INTACH, \textit{op.cit.}, Vol. 1, p. 223.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. p. 219; Lucy Peck, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 267.
The building along the façade has an arched hall now used as a library. The entrance is through a court on the east and a large green area at the rear.

Brick masonry walls, terrazzo floors and concrete roofs are found. It was here that Gandhiji was assassinated. After that a memorial column of sandstone has been erected at the actual site where the Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated.

- **Kashmir House:** Formerly it was the palatial residence. The building originally built by the British as the commander in chief’s residence in 1930s, it was later sold to the state of Kashmir. In the process, the state of Kashmir had to give up its plot in Princes parks.

  Kashmir House is large rectangular building. It is two storeys high building. Main entrance is through a colonnaded porch. The two corners have projecting blocks and the storey over the central porch has a covered colonnade. Brick masonry has shown.

- **Flag Staff House (Commander-in-chief's residence):** Securing and extending the British Empire in India required an experienced commander-in-chief for the partly British, partly Indian soldiers and officers. In accordance with his special significance, the commander-in-

chief was given a magnificent residential Bungalow known as Flag Staff House in New Delhi. Flag Staff House closes another main vista, directly to the south from Viceroy's House. Situated at a major round-point, it was designed by Robert Tor Russell and completed in 1930 in a grand manner.  

The massive house is connected with an axial vista to Viceroy's House. It is a handsome building faced in stone and stucco in an austere classical style, carefully placed in the city to reflect the importance of military power of the Viceroy. It has a very colonial façade, marked by semi-circular arches, pediments, bold plaster lines and typical mouldings. The central portion of the first floor at the rear has a deep verandah.

It is true that the "Flag Staff House," originally meant for the commander-in-chief of the armed forces but which later became the residence of the first Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. It has since been named Teen Murti House and converted into a museum dedicated to Nehru.

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4. Residential Bungalows
3. Ground Floor Plan: Baroda House

Courtesy: Imperial Delhi
4. Ground Floor Plan:
Commander-in-Chiefs Residence, New Delhi

Courtesy: PWD Delhi
5. Drawing: Different orders of the Pillars (Delhi and New Delhi).

Doric

Ionic

Corinthian

Composite

Tuscan
Fig. 40. HYDERABAD HOUSE

Fig. 41. BARODA HOUSE
Fig. 42. PATIALA HOUSE

Fig. 43. TRAVANCORE HOUSE
Fig. 44. KERALA HOUSE

Fig. 45. LALA DIWAN CHAND TRUST HOUSE
Fig. 46. JAIPUR HOUSE

Fig. 47. BIKANER HOUSE
Fig. 48. JAISALMER HOUSE

Fig. 49. DARBHANGA HOUSE
Fig. 50. KOTAH HOUSE

Fig. 51. KAPURTHALA HOUSE
Fig. 52. BIRLA HOUSE

Fig. 53. KASHMIR HOUSE
Fig. 54. FLAG STAFF HOUSE